TIRED AND WEARY

NO.6 THE BIRMINGHAM CITY FANZINE 40p

CHAIRMAN KEN WHELDON SPEAKS OUT

"Sunshine days are just around the corner" Blues Annual General Meeting January 4 1988.

"..I shall be calling an EGM later." Ken Wheldon talking to shareholders about the Elmdon training ground deal at the Blues AGM 21 November 1988.

WOULD YOU BUY A USED CLUB FROM THIS MAN?

" The wind of change is going to blow through Birmingham CIty....Big changes are very near....All I ask of them (the fans) is to have faith in what I've just said....The whole thing will be better for the fans." March 4 1989 Ken Wheldon talking on BRMB radio.

"I do not get a penny piece and have not ever received a penny piece for being at Birmingham City.... I want to do a job for Birmingham City...I think I've almost done it." "I could have left Birmingham City for another club, but I stayed at Birmingham City and I shall stay to the bitter end, and we shall not go into the Third Division." 17 October 1988. Ken Wheldon talking on BRMB Radio.

INSIDE...

YOUNG ONES

ROUGH GUIDE TO THE THIRD

INDEPENDENT SUPPORTERS CLUB

SHARES UPDATE

Tired and Weary Issue 6 was culled together by Jim Bryant, Matt Cole and Steve Beauchampé, with particular assistance from Adrian Brown and David Warren. Thanks also to Sally Cooper, James Docherty, Tom Gavin, Carol Jones, John Kelly, Neil Millard, Michael Preston, Mike Sherry, Rob Trent, Dave Wallace and Sue Wells.

Tired and Weary No's 1-5 are all sold out but photocopies at 20p each (plus 14p A5 SAE) are available from the usual address. To guarantee receiving the next three issues send a cheque or postal order for £1.80 made payable to 'Tired and Weary'. The magazine can also be purchased from Nostalgia and Comics, Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham; Virgin Records, Corporation Street, Birmingham; AFN Distribution, 127 Langbrook Road, London SE3 8RA (postal enquiries only); Sportspages, Charing Cross Road and Rough Trade Records, Talbot Road, London; Selectadisc, Market Street, Nottingham; Football Crazy, Spittal Street, Edinburgh and Strathclyde Programme Shop, Renfield Street, Glasgow.

Tired and Weary is always after YOUR support. It's your magazine. We need your letters, views, photos etc. and also more of your help to sell the magazine for us. Issue 7 will be out at the start of next season.

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COMMENT

In three years Ken Wheldon has reduced Birmingham City from a First Division side which still had a chance of surviving relegation, into a third rate, Third Division club who show no signs whatsoever of turning the corner.

The day he bought control of our club, Wheldon ripped the word ambition from its vocabulary. The inevitability with which relegation has been accepted betrays the faith and loyalty of the supporters. Our best players have been pawned and replaced with a mixture of cheap cast-offs and inexperienced youngsters. Everything about Blues reeks of failure and neglect. The club has become a morgue. Dissolutionment and despondancy stalk its every fibre. It's image - to those who still care - is rock bottom. PR is non-existent. Both Wheldon and Secretary John Westmancoat are forever unavailable for comment. Wheldon's occasional public statements appear as little more than attempts to deflect criticism with promises of riches to come. Thus far they have been no more than hot air.

Throughout it all, the argument has always been put forward that if nothing else, Wheldon is a shrewd businessman who saved the club from bankruptcy. Finally, in his Walsall programme statement, he produces facts to back up this second claim. But a shrewd businessman? As far as Birmingham City is concerned, nothing could be further from the truth. It's very easy to stop spending money as a method of cutting your debts. But there's more to running a business than that. It needs initiative and enterprise, and you must take risks. For over three years Birmingham City have been running scared of this approach. In that time gates have halved to their lowest levels in living memory and are now well below the break-even figure. The club are cemented into their worst ever League placing. And in the Third

Division, revenue from all areas, particularly the TV deal and other commercial activities, will fall substantially. The result of this will be more cost-cutting, more selling of assets, less prospect of success. The team play the most appalling, unentertaining football of any Birmingham City side we can ever remember, helping to make a visit to St Andrews an ordeal rather than a pleasure. Consequently, we are losing a generation of young supporters to Villa, West Brom, Wolves, Coventry and the 'glamour' clubs.

The team is increasingly filled with inexperienced kids, employed - as is the manager - because their wages are low. Pendrey, having been forced (i.e. told) to sell our best players because they were worth a price and were earning too much, is given only a small fraction of the revenue raised and appears to have spent much of the season trying to do deals, contact players and conduct negotiations that were ultimately doomed to failure.

While admiring his dedication to the club and recognising his abilities as a motivating coach, his acceptance of the role of Wheldon's 'yes' man often makes him a pathetic stooge. As he's quite clearly not been given the tools to do the job he should have resigned and made it clear why - that way he could have kept some integrity with the fans. And it must not be forgotten that, however much he might deny it, he DID tell the AGM he'd resign if results didn't improve.

But Pendrey's managerial ability is questionable. His signings, including Trewick, Godden, Richards, Langley and Childs, have been extremely patchy, and our use of set pieces and general standard of play is woeful even given Wheldon's financial approach.

Now both the chairman and manager are using our crop of good youngsters as the excuse for not spending money. We're promised that they will not be sold and Pendrey says he won't be party to such a thing. On the management's past record of bold statements that come to nothing, anyone believing this is naive indeed. Off the field, the club's activities sometimes beggar belief. How anyone claiming to be a businessman can appoint a secretary as bad as John Westmancoat is quite fantastic. Westmancoat (formerly with Wheldon at Walsall) and his wife Betty (formerly with Walsall) form, in our experience, an almost impenetrable wall of secrecy around the club's affairs - and that's before you even get to Wheldon. It is hard to understand how, in the late 1980's, anybody can take such a bloody-minded attitude towards their customers as John Westmancoat does. The contemptuous behaviour he has shown supporters attempting to buy shares is indicative of the treatment he gives anything that puts him to time or trouble. His unavailability is legendary. Does he work more than an hour a week?

The club's appalling business acumen is equal to its footballing ability. And Wheldon's failure to see that the two are interdependent is the height of folly. The shirt sponsors are reportedly on the verge of deserting us in favour of an American Football team and half the first team squad don't have their kit sponsored. The club makes no attempt to sel itself in the wider community at a time when examples of the benefits this can bring are increasing. At the January 1988 AGM, we suggested that the club investigate the sort of community and business initiatives taken by Watford. It would be quite amazing for anyone working in football at secretarial level or above to be unaware what success the community developments at Watford, Preston and Millwall have created. Yet when our need to raise cash and interest in Blues has never been higher, the inactivity from the club has never been more glaring. The reason is clear and simple. It involves extra work, having to be more open with the public and SPENDING MONEY!

And Wheldon will never do that. He didn't at Walsall and he doesn't have the slightest intention of doing it at Birmingham. For he

is at this club for one reason only - to make himself a lot of money. He bought Blues for a knock-down price, paying 25p per share. He's said that the club is for sale and, while it's unclear how much he wants for it, Director Jack Wiseman, in a statement at the last AGM clearly aimed at prospective buyers, said that the shares were now worth 50p. As Wheldon owns 831,700 shares (having converted some of the club's debts into shares in the hope of increasing his winnings) that's a personal profit in excess of £200,000.

Ken Wheldon has a complete stranglehold on Birmingham City and he's choking it to death. He sells our training ground, giving no details of what, by his own admission, is one of the most important deals in the club's history. He fobs off questions about it at the AGM, deflecting criticism by claiming he's to call an Extraordinary General Meeting 'later'. Four months on, no EGM, and we're no wiser. Then he tells us there's a wind of change about to blow through the club and that he's negotiating with three parties who are interested in Blues. These morsels of information, these little hints that we might be on the verge of something big are, frankly, becoming tiresome. The fans want, and have an absolute right, to know what's going on, or if nothing is, then why not. At the moment the only sure thing is that whatever deals Wheldon's cooking up, they won't involve him in any financial risk and will only go through if they are to his benefit i.e. they up the value of his shares.

In nearly 20 years of owning football clubs, Wheldon's on-field success consists of Walsall getting promoted from Division Four once. That's it. No cups, no glory, just season after season of austerity with the odd relegation thrown in. His flouting of League regulations on club ownership at the time of the Walsall groundshare and his shady deals over Ken Armstrong and Wayne Clarke/Stuart Storer remind us that he should be watched like a hawk. His rumoured links with Wolves, which may amount to nothing more than a friendship with the owner Tony Gallagher, could possibly be turned to his benefit. After all, if he wanted to sell Birmingham in a hurry and needed to repeat his Walsall groundsharing threat in an effort to scare someone into paying over the odds for Blues he'd have a ready made accomplice.

But the bottom line is that Birmingham City can slide through the divisions 'till they're a Sunday parks team as long as Wheldon and his hangers-on feel there's something in it for them.

Patronising propaganda in the club programme that relegation to the Third Division isn't necessarily such a bad thing cuts no ice. The fans don't want excuses, they don't want austerity, secrecy, lies. They want one thing above all else - Wheldon out!

RELEGATION CELEBRATION

Come on let's go, to the relegants ball...

You should all know about it by now, but we'll remind you anyway. Saturday, May 13th 1989, Selhurst Park, Crystal Palace v Birmingham City Football Fancy Dress Party.

Our congratulations to whoever's idea it was, and, as the promotional leaflets state, please bring balloons, streamers, hats, flags, scarves and anything silly and Blue and White. Why not arrange sponsorhip to raise money for some good causes at the same time. And we'll award a fiver to the person whose dress most appeals to us. There'll be not rationale to who wins this, it'll just be given to the person who we find most entertaining.

May 13th 1989 then. If you're a Blues fan, you'll be there. What a happy time we'll be having.

SAY NO TO ID CARDS

The ID card Bill is now stumbling through parliament and there's never been a more crucial time for football fans to get active. If you haven't yet written to or visited your MP, then we can't stress enough that you should. If you've a non Tory MP, although he/she will be opposing the Bill, it's important that you make it clear how strongly you and other football fans feel about it - and why. This is because we're partly dependent on these people putting forward logical arguments to defeat the measure.

If your MP's Tory and you aren't happy with their response when you contact them, then tell them so. Explain that they're in parliament as your representative and ask exactly what they've done to canvass their constituents' opinion on this issue. Most MPs know very little about football and the Tories will probably initially just quote from a circular sent to them all by Moynihan. If they mention arrest figures, point out that they're irrelevent - people are innocent until proved guilty - it's the number of convictions that count - ask if they have these - they won't, so tell them to find it out before they start slandering football fans. Also, if they cite the Luton scheme, do explain that the club have just sold their ground to the local council to help pay off debts estimated at around £2m. David Evans has been quite open about this. Tell your MP that as ID cards have never been in the Conservative Party Manifesto, they have no mandate from the public to vote for it.

Certainly tell them that if they support it in parliament, they've no chance of getting your vote again. Point out that many football fans are young first time voters and this legislation will probably alienate them from ever voting Conservative. MPs will only see people if at least one of them lives in their constituency so urge as many friends as possible to visit theirs and you can accompany then when they do so. If an MP still intends to vote for ID cards feel free to tell them that this fact will be very well publicised to football fans (T &W will certainly publish a list).

THE CAMPAIGN

Thanks to everyone who collected signatures for the FSA's petition at the Watford game. And thanks also to Blues for supporting the petition and giving it such good publicity. We ammassed 3,900 signatures and nationally the total is currently 250,000. The FSA campaign has been given £12,000 - put up equally by the League and Wembley Stadium. Red Card day at Villa Park, despite being hampered by ITV's abysmal coverage and Brian Moore's stupid remarks, met with an almost 100% response from the crowd and brought us lots of publicity. Wembley have granted permission for petitioning at the Littlewoods Cup Final. This gives Luton fans an opportunity to express their distaste for the Bill, and also provides us with a chance to embarrass Evans and Moynihan.

The Bill itself has received all party condemnation in the House of Lords. Regrettably, the opposition Peers, while arguing their points reasonably well, have often copped out of calling for votes, seeming content with their one fairly cosmetic ammendment and subsequent political point scoring.

The Bill is extremely vague and one former Tory Minister has described it as the worst drafted piece of legislation in the last 30 years. It leaves the major decisions on the running of the scheme to the proposed Football Membership Authority, which will be accountable to a government Minister. Moynihan has twice tried to blackmail the football authorities. Once by saying he will not back a return to Europe unless the Bill becomes law, and also by ordering the FA and The League to establish the framework for the FMA before the Bill had even started its passage through parliament. These are classic examples of the Miniature Against Sports bullyboy tactics. Again we urge you write to Jack Dunnett c/o The Football League, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire FY8 1JG and Graham Kelly FA Chief Executive at the Football Association, Lancaster Gate, London, telling them you expect them to have nothing to do with the establishment or running of the FMA. The Bill would be almost unworkable if the football authorities refused to co-operate, and there's nothing in it legally forcing them to do so. Inevitably, if the Bill becomes law the government will blame the FMA for all the subsequent cock-ups. Therefore, anyone serving on it lays themselves open to ridicule and complaint if they do the government's dirty work for them.

Finally, if anybody doubts this Bill can be defeated, don't underestimate your own power. A two year campaign by Charlton fans recently resulted in the club announcing that from the middle of next season they will be back playing at The Valley. Spurs reversed their decision to replace the Shelf terracing after a group of supporters waged a year-long battle to save it. The fact that a few hundred fans regularly stood/sat behind the goal in the Railway End prompted Ken Wheldon to open a section of the Tilton to Blues supporters next season.

This time we're fighting the government and we need the help of everyone in football and all the parties in the Commons. Put to a free vote it is widely accepted that this Bill wouldn't stand a chance. We can beat it !

If you've any ideas on campaigning, or want more advice, write to the FSA at the address below, or phone 021-778-2627 or 021-744-2310. Join the FSA - send £2 to 59 Oakwood Road, Halewood, Liverpool. If you haven't signed the petition or would like forms to get filled in, write away for them enclosing an SAE. Also available are Fans Say NO to ID Cards badges - 20p each (plus 14p p&p) and T Shirts (same message) £3.75 (incl p&p). Sizes medium, large or Graham Kelly. The West Midlands FSA meets on the second Monday of each month in the upstairs room of the Victoria pub in John Bright Street, near Goldwyns Club and the Futurist Cinema in Birmingham City centre. Kick off is 8pm

Steve.

The Young Ones By Matt Cole

One of the few positive things to come out of Ken Wheldon's Save, Save, Save approach has been the emergence of a crop of promising young players. Cheap and cheerful they may be, but, under the current policy of management by austerity, and given Garry Pendrey's decidedly dodgy judgement in the transfer market, these kids represent just about the only way forward for the club. So, as Steve Beauchampé would say, "thank heavens for little boys".

You've heard of the Busby Babes, well now meet Pendrey's Pups. Not quite the same class yet perhaps, but who knows what they'll turn into. Already the close ball control of Paul Tait, the speed of Ronnie Morris and the skill of Simon Sturridge have brought some cheer to the hardcore faithful of St Andrews. And, as the season draws to a close and Blues give up the Second Division as a bad job, more and more unfamiliar faces are appearing in the first team.

Michael Burton

Kevin Ashley

Ronnie Morris

So where are they all coming from? Well, the Purity Youth League actually, via a spell in the Midland Senior League (the two other divisions in which Blues compete). Now, while opposition in the Youth League includes the talented youngsters of fellow midlanders Forest, Coventry and Villa (who we beat 2-0 back in January thanks to Neil Sproston's double strike), the Senior League opponents aren't nearly so daunting. The title 'Midland Senior League' is somewhat confusuing, with fixtures against such local sides as Tranmere, Scarborough, Hartlepool and Halifax as well as crappy midland clubs Peterborough and Northampton. The team is usually split fairly evenly between 'senior' players and youngsters. At home to Hartlepool for example, the line-up included not only old lags Hansbury, Trewick and Langley, but also kids such as Paul Masefield and Michael Burton. The side lie around mid-table in a division of 14, compared to the bottom half position the youth team finds itself occupying. But then, as coach Fred Davies says, it's not so much about producing a winning side, rather the job is to develop young players into first team material. Nonetheless, the youth team have enjoyed success, winning last season's Midland Youth Cup as well as the Midland Floodlit Championship and the Midland Floodlit Cup. Davies must take much credit for the youth policy's achievements, which is particulary pleasing as so many of the youngsters hail from the Birmingham area. It's a fact Garry Pendrey touched on recently, in his programme notes for the Oxford game.

"It will be a proud day for the Blues when these players step out together and, indeed, a very rare one too as it has been many, many years since a team consisting of all local players played in the same team at this level."

So do Blues have a future set of stars in their midst? Well, it's doubtful they'll all make the grade, but it only needs a couple

of the calibre of Julian Dicks or Kevin Ashley to make the youth policy worthwhile. But for those that have already appeared in the first team, the next stage - grooming and nurturing their potential - is crucial. It's not easy for youngsters to play in a struggling and increasingly inexperienced side in front of an impatient and expectant crowd. With the manager and chairman audibly under pressure during home games, young players who are used to enjoying reasonable success, results-wise, in the junior teams, have an extra problem to overcome.

How they react can vary greatly. Take Ronnie Morris. At first he was a breath of fresh air (remember his performance against Villa in the Littlewoods Cup 1st Leg), but then he went decidedly off the boil. And maybe Paul Tait and Mark Yates have played a bit too much first team football this season. kevin Ashley on the other hand, though admittedly that bit more experienced, has clearly revelled in his defensive responsibilities.

What would almost certainly help all our young players would be the chance to compete regularly against better quality opposition before they are plunged into the first team. To this end, it is vital that the club persevere with their attempts to enter a side in either the Central League or Football Combination (which we foolishly withdrew from in 1986 as an economy measure). Being a third division club won't help our cause, but at present our youngsters are surely suffering from the almost total absence of competition against first division reserves.

What Blues must now do is end the policy of selling their best players. It would be a tragedy if the flowers of our youth team were hived off to balance the books, not least after the work Fred Davies and Garry Pendrey ('cos he's a decent coach after all) have put in. The possibility of other clubs reaping the benefits of our coaching staff's work is very real. If Wheldon doesn't find the money for the manager to build a team around these youngsters, then the better ones will understandably get itchy feet and be tempted into a higher grade of football. Even worse, they could be asked to do too much too young, and end up joining the ranks of the also-rans who never quite made it. So if you're going to stick around Ken, their future's in your hands. You'd better not fail them.

If you want to see the Youth Team (and you should), they play home games at Elmdon on Saturday mornings KO 10.45am, while the Midland Senior League side play at St Andrews on Wednesday afternoons starting at 1.00pm. It's usually worth checking with Blues on the day of the match in case of postponements or re-arranged kick-off times. Meanwhile, additional non-first team games are listed in 'Blues News' on pages 4 or 5. Alternatively, you can always check by phoning the club.

I have a confession to make. While I regularly travel away to watch AFC Bournemouth thrash the boxer shorts off our opponents, I missed this year's annihilation of Blues. However, I did make it for last season's 1-1 draw, when both the attendance and the weather were somewhat better.

There are quite a few plus points as far as Birmingham City's treatment of disabled supporters goes. Firstly, the club hasn't (as far as I can recall) abdicated its responsibility by handing over the allocation of spaces to the St Johns Ambulance Brigade or some other well meaning, but infuriatingly patronising group.Secondly, whoever constructed/designed the area had enough foresight to ensure that each row of wheelchairs would be at a different height, a sort of extra wide terracing if you like Such a logical step (no pun intended) but one which has for too long eluded the greatest minds of Wembley (where else?) Stadium.

One big disadvantage though is that bloody great 'Remploy' sign adorning the enclosure. I don't know why, but it make me feel as though the whole world is looking at us stuck in the corner (well, 2,500 of you anyway).

Yep, Birmingham City's facilities for the disabled are pretty decent I guess, but I think one factor that's been overlooked is integration.

When I go to a game I would prefer to be with the friends that I've travelled with, not limited to a corner of the ground that is forever dull. I'm not knocking Blues' efforts, because so much has been done over the years to improve facilities for wheelchair-bound fans (except at Bournemouth, anyway) but I would like to see those who have to USE these facilities being consulted before they're built, not afterwards.

Blues don't charge for disable spectators, but anyone wishing to stand with them will have to pay £4.50. Contact the club to book a place, if possible giving 24 hours notice. Blues can provide unaccompanied wheelchair-bound fans with someone to get them into the ground, look after and them out again at the final whistle.

For further details contact Blues on 021-772-0101.

Rob Trent - Bournemouth

Home and Away Legs

Who was the greatest... Gil Merrick or Tony Coton? Kenny Burns or Noel Blake? Gentleman Joe Bradford or Keith Bertschin? (Stuff them.) No. Who was the greatest, Lee Jenkins or Paul Hart?

Both are legends in their own right. Both played in thrilling, high-scoring matches (well, nearly). Both broke their leg in the first half of their debut and were consequently remembered with immortality.

Jenkins - who hailed from Rops in Finland - had at, 42 minutes, the longer playing career at St Andrews. He was a bit of an oddity, even by Blues eccentric standards. Having descended from Lapland on the Wednesday, and signed for Blues on the Thursday, he duly trotted out two days later proudly wearing the number eight shirt. Although a subsequent Blues News did print a photo of him taking a corner, personally, I remember little of his performance and three minutes before half-time, those good people of the St John's Ambulance Brigade spirited him into the tunnel on a stretcher, and away, away, away, never to be seen again.

Paul Hart landed on Emmeline Street in late 1986 via a more traditional route, the one on which lived a string of reasonably placed and well-known First Division clubs (well, Leeds were in those days). We thoroughly expected a put out to seed career of the magnitude of Colin Todd, Archie Gemmill or Dennis Somebody-or-other. Sadly, this promise was shortlived. After what proved to be the most stable 38 minutes that Blues played all that term, Paul Hart was crocked by Tommy Williams (who ensured his first team place for the remainder of the season!) Enter the stretcher, exit Paul Hart.

And what of these two now? Lee Jenkins did recover, and would have played again for Blues, except that Uncle Ron suffered from an attack of the Altrinchams first. Although the dour one did resurface at The Hawthorns, Jenkins didn't follow to make his customary one appearance for the man. (His only other game having been for Villa under... guess who?) Instead, Jenkins disappeared from the face of the football earth, which probably means he's playing for FC Rops or still in the care of the St John's Ambulance people).

Paul Hart, on the other hand, moved across the Midlands to while away some time at Notts. County. Here he pursued two roles, with varying success. In fairness, being consigned to East Birmingham Casualty Ward by your nearest team mate is probably a harrowing experience, and it honestly looked as though the shock had been too much to bear. On field, his major contribution was in the sales of respiratory aids, pacemakers and the like, aided by a nifty little number in the foot-lifting department. Off the pitch, he coached the youth and reserve teams to a particularly high standard, and having left behind him a thriving set-up, is now doing similar things as manager of Chesterfield.

So then, who was the greatest? Who cares?

THOSE BIG MATCH DETAILS IN FULL

19/10/85 - West Brom 2, Blues 1 - No 8 Lee Jenkins (sub Dicks,42).

1/1/87 - Blues 3, Plymouth 2 - No 5 Paul Hart (sub Kennedy (!) 38).

FOOTNOTE

Blues have a recent history of short-term heroes which would be hard to match. It's hard to remember that Seamus McDonagh wore a Blues shirt, after all those momentous performances for Bolton and Notts County. But he did. Billy Ronson knew what was good for him, scuttling back to Barnsley after just two appearances. I'm also told that John Linford, which I thought was a make of dog food, had one game (and was sub versus Barnsley) on loan from Ipswich; even though that appearance, away at Charlton (really at Charlton, too) in November 1984, was on Match of the Day (!), I remember nothing whatsoever of him.

For all I know, he could be another Blues legend just waiting to be written about.

DAVID WARREN

Give me Moor, Moor, Moor, Moor, Moor

Since the introduction of automatic promotion between the GM Vauxhall Conference and Division Four, football fans have begun to take notice of non-League soccer. So which local side is best placed to stake a claim for Football League entry? The first name that springs to mind is Kidderminster Harriers, riding high in the GMVC, but the top club within Birmingham is to be found in the Beazer Homes Premier League (the old Southern League).

Moor Green Football Club play at The Moorlands in Sherwood Road, Hall Green. Formed in 1901 by local cricketers, keen to stay together during winter, they enjoyed much early success. During the 1930's they beat last season's European Cup winners PSV Eindhoven - twice lifting the prestigious Verviers trophy, a forerunner to the European club competitions, when sides from Belgium, France, Germany and Holland were also invited to take part. But 'The Moors', who are also full members of the Football Association - a distinction very few non-League clubs hold, soon went into a decline which lasted until the 1970's. Then in 1979 Moor Green gained national attention via the FA Cup when giant-killers Telford and Runcorn were both toppled as Moors reached the First Round.

But the draw was unkind and the team had to travel to Stafford Rangers where they were unlucky to lose, conceding two own goals past an injured 'keeper.

The 1980/81 season saw the club win the Midland Combination League and Cup double. Then in 1983 Southern League status was secured and Moors had begun their climb into what could be termed football's Division Six. After finishing 6th, 4th, 19th and 4th, Moors won promotion last season in probably the greatest spell in the club's history. The campaign included a 4-1 away win at Merthy Tydfil, just days after the Welshmen had hit the headlines by beating Italian giants Atalanta in European Cup Winners Cup. A season spanning 69 matches climaxed on the final day when Moors needed to beat Coventry Sporting at home to claim the runners-up spot and a place in the Premier Division. A tense first half ended goalless, but a 7-2 demolition after the break led to celebrations lasting well into the early hours.

Now, theoretically, Moors are only two seasons away from rubbing shoulders with the likes of Burnley and, if the present trend continues, even Birmingham City. Laughable? Remember that only a few years ago Newport County were European Cup Winners Cup Quarter Finalists. Next season - if they reach next season - County will be League visitors to The Moorlands.

Manager Bob Faulkner has retained his squad for this season and Moor Green have settled into a comfortable mid-table position. Two of the current team are tipped for success. Young forward Phil Davies, last season's Player of the Year, is the type of man spectators love to watch. His skill and exceptional scoring ability have brought 64 goals in a 111 game career, but with them a knee injury likely to sideline him for the remainder of the term. Fellow striker David Hadley has explosive pace and aggression which has prompted several offers for his services. Last season Weymouth bid £18,000 but were turned down on personal terms while Wolves were allegedly prepared to spend between £35-50,000 for him. But Hadley has a well paid job outside football and doesn't seem prepared to give up such security for the risky world of professional soccer.

With 100 appearances for Aston Villa, Lincoln and Scunthorpe, defender David Hughes has the most Football League experience of all Moors' players, while recent signing Matt Forman is an ex-Wolves midfielder and left back Graham Clegg quit Blackpool to combine a teaching job with part-time soccer.

Despite playing attractive, attacking football, home crowds, averaging only 350, have been disappointing. Away support, on the other hand, is among the League's best. The match at Dover even prompted a dozen supporters to cross the Channel to Calais and thereby claim to be the first English fans to be allowed back into Europe!

With attendances declining in the city, the missing supporters must be anxious to find a fresh club to follow. If Moor Green's rate of two promotions in five years continues it could be the non-League upstarts from Hall Green who are contesting the Mersey side championship domination.

To those who scoff, just answer one question: Who rose from Southern League football in 1977 to the First Division and an FA Cup Final victory over Liverpool last season? In football NOTHING is impossible!

Mark Preston

STORY of the BLUES part 3

"TIRED ARMY BLUES"

IN THE LAST EPISODE - A PIN-UP POP IDOL HAD TAKEN OVER BRUMINGHAM BUT DESPITE PROMISES NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.

THE TEAM HAD DROPPED TO BOTTOM OF THE 2ND DIVISION AND THE ATTACK HAD KEPT TWENTY-ONE CLEAN SHEETS.
SO HOW WOULD THEY ATTRACT THE FANS BACK?

PRICE CONCESSIONS...

ENTERTAINING FOOTBALL...

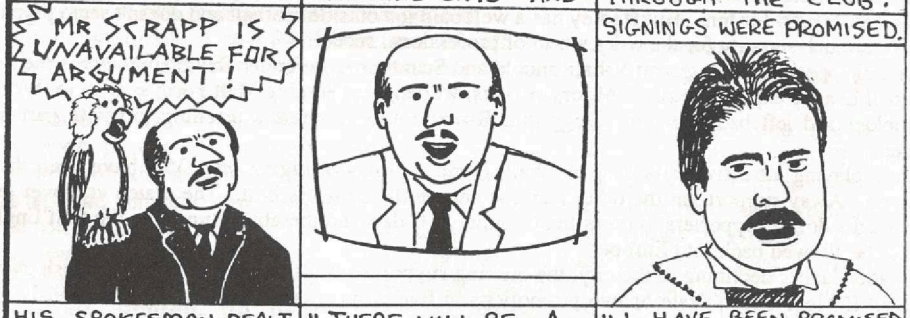
NOVELTY GIMMICKS...

BUT TO NO AVAIL.
OH LITTLE MAN WHAT NOW?
Evening Wail
WINDS OF CHANGE AT BRUMINGHAM.
KEN SCRAPP SAID TODAY THAT THERE WILL BE A LOAD OF WIND COMING FROM ST. ANGELAS.

THEN CHAIRMAN, KEN SCRAPP MADE A HISTORIC STATEMENT.

HE TOLD GEORGE GAVILLAFAN ABOUT "SUNSHINE DAYS" AND

THE "WINDS OF CHANGE" THAT WOULD BLOW THROUGH THE CLUB.



HIS SPOKESMAN DEALT WITH ALL THE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS "WINDS OF CHANGE".

"THERE WILL BE A LOT OF CHANGES THAT WILL CHANGE THE FATE OF THE CLUB".

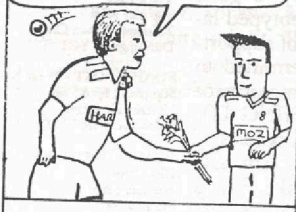
"I HAVE BEEN PROMISED CASH TO SPEND AND I WILL BE BRINGING IN NEW PLAYERS".

BIRMINGHAM IN A COMA

THE LAST OF THE FAMOUS INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS TURNS THEM DOWN.

AND THE PLAYERS BEGIN TO VOICE THEIR DISCONTENT...

...I CAN FEEL THE BALL FLYING OVER MY HEAD...



EVEN THE FAVOURITES HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE...

SO THE "SWEET AND TENDER HOOLIGANS" CALL FOR BLOOD.

SCRAPP PROMISES TO INTRODUCE THE NEW MAN TO THE PRESS.

BUT!

APOLOGIES TO IAN HANDYSIDES.

TWO KEN SCRAPPS? OH NO! THAT JOKE ISN'T FUNNY ANY MORE!

A group of Birmingham City fans wrote to **Morrissey** to ask him if he'd consider becoming the club's Chairman (apparently they sing the popular terrace chant "sack the board, sack the board, sack the board"

Subversive Literature

The Alternative Football Network continues to expand, but when and why did all the scribbling start and what's it all achieved?

The first ink spilt in anger was back in January 1986 when OFF THE BALL hit the terraces, (thrown there by disgruntled buyers) closely followed by WHEN SATURDAY COMES and Scotland's THE ABSOLUTE GAME. There were a few club based mags already on the scene, (CITY GENT, TERRACE TALK, FINGERPOST for instance) but it was the arrival of the three national publications that was responsible for stimulating the eruption of many new organs up and down the country. Yet this was no craze, no fashionable cult waiting to die out. The arrival of these independent mags may have triggered much subsequent activity, but the real ammunition for it came from the state of the game itself and the fans' relation to it.

The first issue of When Saturday Comes stated: "Some people are in football because it's what they do best and what they enjoy doing, others are in it to squeeze every last drop of prestige, power and money out of it - and at the moment The Squeezers are having a fine old time." Superficially, little has changed - it;s the reason the fanzines and the FSA are winning so many recruits. Yet since those more underground days of When Saturday Comes No. 1, the squeezers have themselves been squeezed, albeit very, very slightly.

Take Charlton for instance. In 1987, this impassioned comment came from the pages of their club fanzine, VOICE OF THE VALLEY: "Debris lies scattered behind the Covered End. The smell of hamburgers is displaced by the smell of neglect. The floodlights never pierce the evening gloom. The theatre of our dreams is dark." The decline of The Valley and the move to Selhurst Park symbolise the effect that the botched up autocratic running of many clubs has had on the game and its supporters. Two years on, The Valley remains closed, but through the efforts of the likes of The Voice the Valiants aresoon to return. From a seemingly impossible situation before the magazine began, the club finally has some sort of future.

Meanwhile, at Stamford Bridge, the CHELSEA INDEPENDENT fanzine was the instigator and now the mouthpiece of the Chelsea Independent Supporters Association - so important for their firepower on issues such as racism, hooliganism, electronic fences, property developers and Ken Bates.

In Scotland, Celtic's NOT THE VIEW and Rangers' FOLLOW FOLLOW have condemned racial and sectarian bigotry. In doing so, they've gone some way to crush the stereotyped labels of their respective sets of supporters. Another fanzine determined to clear the good names of the majority of their club's fans is MARCHING TOGETHER. Produced by supporters of 'Leeds United Against Racism and Facism', their goal is to make Elland Road a racially harmonious place. As they say, it's been a long time since Leeds fans were praised, but thanks to this group's commendable efforts, the name of Leeds United is now being associated with positive things. Also along the right lines are UTD UNITED, the joint West Ham/Dundee United fanzine, and 400 YARDS, for Notts County and Forest fans.

These again show that football supporting can be a positive experience bringing people together, rather than the agent of the negative images perpetuated so often in the national media. And now fanzines have finally reached the lost souls of Villa Park. Yes, a Danny Villa from Surrey (no sniggering, please) has produced WITTON WISDOM. Not a great first issue (but then, neither was ours) but they'll learn.

So, the AFN's humour, passion and talent has shown, that there's more to football supporting than the media would ever have realised.

Jim

ADDRESSES

OFF THE BALL
70p incl p&p
PO Box 851
Selly Oak
Birmingham B29 6PD

WHEN SATURDAY COMES
50p plus A4 sae
1-11 Ironmonger Row
London EC1V 3QM

THE ABSOLUTE GAME
70p incl p&p
PO Box 303
Southern DO
Edinburgh EH9 1NE

CITY GENT - Bradford City (Special Issue)
£1 plus 30p A5 sae
46 Ainsty Road
Wetherby LS22 4QS

TERRACE TALK - York City
50p incl p&p
7 Copper Beech Close
Dunnington YO1 5PY

FINGERPOST - West Brom
50p plus 19p A5 sae
19 Ashville Drive
Halesowen B63 3SD

VOICE OF THE VALLEY - Charlton
60p incl p&p
PO Box 387
London SE9 6EH

CHELSEA INDEPENDENT
30p plus 14p A5 sae
PO Box 459
London E7 8LU

NOT THE VIEW - Celtic
70p incl p&p
PO Box 306
Glasgow G21 2EA

FOLLOW FOLLOW - Rangers
70p incl p&p
PO Box 539
Glasgow G11 7LT

MARCHING ALTOGETHER - Leeds
FREE plus 14p A5 sae
Leeds Trades Club
Savile Mount, Leeds

UTD UNITED - Dundee U /West Ham
50p incl p&p
3 Douglas Terrace
Dundee DD3 6HN

400 YARDS - Notts County and Forest
35p plus A5 sae
24 Grey Street
Newthorpe NG16 2 EF

WITTON WISDOM - Aston Villa
50p incl p&p
60 High Road
Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7QL

Rough Guide To The Third

Well, Ken's third rate running of the club has finally, tragically, pushed us into Divison Three. Yet despite the absolute avoidability of it all, the third does promise some appealing experiences.

Next season, instead of the drearily designed sterility of Highbury and the inflated self-admiration that is Old Trafford, we can enjoy visits to simple, homely clubs who epitimise the traditional ideals of English League football that so many fans hold dear. Okay, so another outing to Reading might be a bit of a drag, but so too would a return to Barnsley or Bournemouth. Moreover, there'll be seaside trips to Blackpool, Southend, (hopefully) and Swansea-on-sea, visits to the Roman towns of Chester and Bath, and the chance to

watch the lads play famous names from the past such as Preston and Bolton.

Perhaps the most unusual stadium we'll colonise will be Northampton Town's County Ground. It's shared with the County Cricket Club and is thus three-sided. The boundary of the cricket pitch actually spills 20 yards onto the hallowed football turf. The soccer club pays rent to a trust dominated by the cricket faction who consequently tend to get their own way on decision-making. During the summer the football pitch is used as a car park with the soccer team forced to play away when fixtures clash. In 1970 the Cobblers, then in the fourth division, drew Manchester United in the fifth round of the FA Cup. A temporary stand was erected along the open-side. Town were thumped 8-2 (George Best scoring six) and ended the season applying for re-election.

Bristol Rovers should be another curious fixture, with the Pirates now playing at Bath City's Twerton Park. In 1980, a fire at their old ground, Eastville, destroyed the South Stand, offices and dressing rooms. Twerton Park's an above average non-League ground, but hardly compensation for those who following the fire, used to watch games from the hard shoulder of the M32 jumping around while dodging the traffic. Still, they could always move into the houses behind Twerton's Bath End whose upstairs windows afford an excellent view of the pitch.

Still residing in Bristol are rivals City. The Robin's Ashton Gate nest has two imposing stands along its sides. The high Dolman Stand was named after a bowler and there's still a bowls club behind it which pays City a rent. If the football doesn't appeal, and you're into pentanque or bowls, then they're open on Saturday afternoons. But Bristol is more famous for its seafarin links, as reflected in Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island'. In fact the city's Handoger Trow Inn is supposedly the place where Long John Silver used to get pickled to the gills in. So now you know.

It may seem hard to believe, but

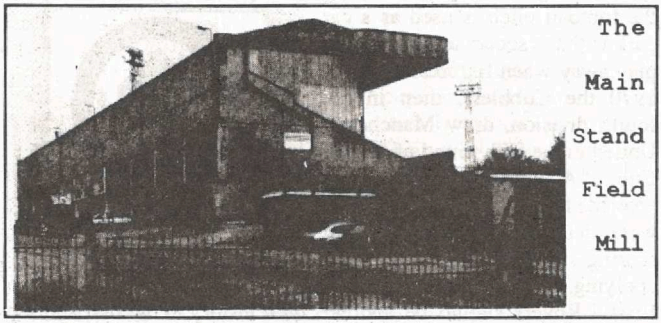
Bury have spent the majority of their history in the first and second divisions. Unfortunately, unlike us, their 'sunshine days' belong in the past, when the town itself flourished and its old industires of cotton, wool, engineering and paper making were booming. They won the FA Cup twice at the turn of the century, including the 6-0 trouncing of Derby in 1903, which remains the biggest margin of victory in a final. Consequently, it's not surprising that with Manchester only 3 miles away, the Shakers' support is perhaps a little on the senior side. Nevertheless, the present team is a good young one which could conceivably divert the flow of Bury's youth away from Moss Side and the Warwick Road North.

Preston North End are on of England's great footballing institutions. They won the inaugural League Championship in 1887/88 and the following season became the first side to do the 'double', achieving it in style without losing one League game or conceding a single Cup goal.

Rough Guide To The Third

Tom Finney, the name synonomous with North End, was one of the best wingers this country's ever produced. Preston may not be the team they were (they'd be pretty bloody old after all) but I for one can't wait to wallow in the nostalgia of a club whose only artificiality is the pitch they play on. Just down the tracks lies Blackpool, famous for its filthy beaches, dirty weekends and Stanley Matthews. The proximity of the railway and bus stations, and the 3,000 space car park makes Blackpool one of the most accessible grounds in the country. Mansfield on the other hand certainly is not! Situated in the centre of the North Notts coalfield, with Sherwood Forest and the Vale of Trent nearby, it's a devil of a job to find, and the town doesn't even have a railway station. The Machine recently played at Field Mill in the League Cup. It'll be good to return if only to see if they're still worthy of holding the coveted 'Worse Tannoy System Than St Andrews' award, and to judge in the cold light of day whether the West Stand really does look like a paper hat.

Brentford ! What can you say about the place? Well first the bad news - the board support ID cards. Now the good news - Griffin Park is the only League ground with a pub on each corner.



The Main Stand Field Mill

Brentford here we come !

Chester should be another fine day out. It's a beautiful city with its ancient Roman wall still intact. There's also a castle, cathedral, loads of old buildings, a river and a racecourse, so it's no wonder the Seal's Sealand Road ground takes second place to the city's other attractions.

The club's never been higher than division three, and apart from the odd Welsh Cup win, their greatest claim to fame is that Ian Rush once played for them.

Now Cheshire isn't exactly a soccer hotbed. Chester's neighbours Alexandra have only twice climbed out of Division Four - and both times they were relegated the following season. They also bless 'em, hold the record for the fewest League goals scored in a season and the worst fourth division record on home defeats in a season as well as having made seven applications for re-election. Still, the Railwaymen look like shunting out of the fourth division again to give us a game, and you can't really say you've lived 'til you've been stuck in Crewe on a wet Saturday night.

Finally, one of my favourite away days next season will be Fulham. London offers some decent ale houses and the fixture also enables a visit to the excellent Sportspages in Charing Cross Road which stocks scores of fanzines. Craven Cottage lies among quiet residential streets on the banks of the Thames and, from the home end at least, you can see the river and its traffic sailing by, making it one of the best appointed of all football stadia. Indeed, having stood in the Hammersmith End overlooking the famous old Cottage surrounded by families passionately supporting their club, it's a wonder people such Moynihan don't spend more of their precious time fighting the money sharks who've little regard for clubs like Fulham beyond their real estate price.

So, Thatcher United willing, there's much to look forward to next season, with so many new places to visit. Not convinced? The thought of Ken closing off the seats and terracing and placing the remaining faithful in the Remploy Stand depressing? The repeat after me: "We aren't really being relegated to the third division for the first time in our 114 year history. Rather, we have been fortunately selected for the honour of playing an important role in the meritocratic functioning of the greatest league on earth." Still not happy? You're a hard lot to please.

Jim Bryant

A BLOODY UNFAIR SHARE: WHY ARE WE WAITING?

In issue 5 we offered for sale shares in Blues. The response was excellent and the appropriate share transfer forms were sent to Secretary John Westmancoat in December. There the good news ends. Three months later, and despite numerous 'phone calls and visits to St Andrews, the club appear to have done nothing to process the applications. We have been fobbed off with excuses and lies, and have generally been treated with contempt. On one visit to St Andrews I asked to speak to Mr Westmancoat but was told that he was out, despite the fact that I could see him in the club offices. Another time I was informed that he was in a meeting. As I left, who should I see driving up to the club, but Mr Westmancoat. Maybe there's two of them? Maybe not!

Recently, Westmancoat assured me that he was doing all he could to arrange a board meeting which would discuss whether the club would approve the transfers. Well, John, with a board of three that shouldn't be too difficult. He also said that the club were to charge £2.50 for each transaction, an extortionate fee considering the minimal work involved in processing the applications.

Let us make the position clear. A shareholder is legally entitled to transfer their shares to whoever they wish, unless the club have justifiable reasons to oppose it. Our club's only reason is that they don't care about the fans - the people who pay their wages (yes Ken, we know you don't get paid - but then you don't deserve to). As for the £2.50 fee, we are currently enquiring as to whether the club are entitled to charge this.

In the meantime, and to assist those of you who have applied in good faith for a share in the Blues, we are launching a proxy exchange scheme. This means that shareholders who do not wish to or can't attend either the Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting should contact T&W. We'll then put you in touch with fans who have applied for a share through our scheme, who will then be able to go as your representative using your form of proxy. In the meantime we will continue with our efforts to get applicants their shares.

So if you wish to either purchase a share (send £1.25 made payable to T&W) or if you're an existing shareholder wishing to get involved in the proxy exchange scheme, then please send us your full name, address and telephone number. We'll do our best, but please be patient.

POLICE PLEASE ME

If there are any aspects of policing at St Andrews that you're not satisfied with then Blues, like every other club, have a police liason officer. In fact, appropriately enough for the manpower mad West Midlands force, there's two of them. Inspector Badden (!) and PC Hackney. Write them c/o either Sheldon Police Station, Sheldon Heath Road, Birmingham B26 or Blues if you want to raise anything (good as well as bad) about police activities in and around St Andrews. (We've phoned Blues a couple of times to find out the name of the Police contact, but on both occasions Secretary John Westmancoat was unavailable and no-one else could help. Eventually, we got the answer via The Villa!)

Meanwhile, you may have noticed that the West Midlands Police, after doubling their charges to our six local League clubs last year have just successfully applied for an additional 13% increase. The clubs are campaigning to reverse this decision and we urge you to add your voice of complaint. And we would go further. Tired and Weary believes that the police's standard of servide and manpower levels at West Midlands football grounds requires immediate investigation by the Police Authority. We believe that every law-abiding citizen should be concerned at the present state of affairs. If you agree, make your voice heard by writing to the Chairman of the Police Authority finance committee, Councillor D M Ablett at 28 The Broadway, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 3EE and give him some verbals.

As a keen Blues supporter I'd like to point out the overt sexism we females suffer on the terraces. On the occasions when I have to go alone to football matches it's almost inevitable that at least one drunken idiot or adolescent moron will come up and say "I know what you're here for darling - and it can't possibly be the football".

I also find that whenever I contribute to any male conversation about football, I usually get "Is that the one you fancy then?". This was annoying enough when I was much younger, but at the age of 25 find it intolerable and tend to keep my mouth shut. And as for my local newsagents, they think I'm and absolute freak because I buy 'Shoot' instead of 'Woman' and 'Woman's Own'.

As far as the Blues themselves are concerned I'm almost tempted to get my boots out and turn up for training.

DIANE DREW YARDLEY

A word form our sponsors

Blues secretary John Westmancoat, Ken Wheldon's 'puppet-on-a-string' has complied with police requests to close the Railway End paddock at St Andrews for the remainder of the season due to alleged bad language and trouble.

Earlier in the season Westmancoat increased seating charges in this area of the ground from £4.00 to £5.00. His reason on that ocassion was that supporters were standing rather than sitting on the seats.

Concerning the Railway End enclosure, is it just a coincidence that the two decisions followed protests from supporters from that area after home matches against West Bromwich Albion and Manchester City?

Like many Blues supporters I oppose the way the club is being run and the board's disgraceful and insensitive abuse of Blues supporters. Mr Westmancoat should know that his ill-treatment of Blues fans and the 'like it or lump it' attitude that he and the board employ will never stop loyal die-hard Blues supporters from stating their disgust at the way the club has been allowed to rot during Wheldon's tight-fisted regime.

Mr Westmancoat, your feeble and laughable excuses will just not wash with Blues supporters.

PAUL BERRY - SOLIHULL

As the official historian of Leyton Orient, I'm wondering if any of your readers can supply me with details on the former Orient and Blues players Eddy Brown and Michael 'Mickey' Bullock for a book I'm compiling. Thank you in anticipation.

NEIL KAUFMAN,
LEYTON ORIENT STATISTICIANS GROUP
C/O 3RD FLOOR, 18
STRINGER HOUSE,
NUTTAL STREET,
LONDON N1 5LN.

I liked seeing the popular version of 'End of the Road' in Issue 4. It's certainly much more appropriate for the football fan to sing than the original. Let's hope it's heard loud and clear from the terraces of St Andrews, for the team certainly needs the fans behind them at this time of need.

Readers may be interested in the origins of Blues' link with the song, which dates back to that amazing 1955/56 season when we reached the FA Cup Final, only to be beaten 3-1 by Manchester City.

The story of the song was related by the then Blues' manager, Arthur Turner, to Eric Woodward of the Birmingham Mail Sports Final following the 3-0 semi-final victory over Sunderland at Hillsborough. Although not an emotional type, Turner admitted to being greatly moved when the Blues' fans started singing "Keep right on to the end of the road" during the game. "Believe me, it did a lot to us all", he said. "We were very touched".

Turner went on to describe how the song was first introduce to the club by Blues Scottish left winger, Alex Govan. Apparently, the song didn't start at Sheffield, but was sung by the team on the coach travelling to the 4th Round tie at Leyton Orient, which Blues won comfortably 4-0.

"we didn't pay much attention to it then", Turner admitted. "But on the journey to Highbury for the 6th Round we were having our usual sing-song, when I called to Govan, "Come on Alex, let's have one from Scotland." Alex started singing That Song - and we all joined in. We sang it three or four times and when the coach arrived outside Highbury the lads were still singing it for all they were worth. Crowds of Blues' fans were watching and listening. And that said Turner "was how it caught on".

BRIAN FELLOWS - EMSWORTH

All Clubs Together

Following our call in Issue 5 for the formation of an independent supporters club, we were contacted by Neil Millard who is keen to help establish such an organisation. Below, Neil explains the whys and wherefores behind his idea.

Send money now and join the 'Birmingham City Independent Supporters Association.' Well you can't just yet I'm afraid, but it is something I hope to be able to say by the start of next season. During the coming months hopefully publicity will be more widespread, but this is a first attempt to outline reasons for the formation of a club, and to ask for assistance from Blues fans.

Firstly, why do we need an independent association? My recollections of the Supporters Club are of trying to get seats on coaches and finding a fairly inaccessible organisation in the dreamy surroundings of the Railway End. In fact, you'd hardly know they existed. In all the turbulent years of the late eighties we've rarely heard a murmur from the 'official' supporters club. Clearly they won't bite the hand that feeds them by criticising or opposing Blues. Independence from the football club's control will give disgruntled fans a platform to air their grievances.

But an independent supporters club isn't just intended to concern itself with strife. Being an optimist, I'm sure we'll be able to involve ourselves in more positive activities. Organising travel on Tuesday evenings in February even if the coach isn't full, sponsoring Dean Peer's kit, fundraising, social events, pub games etc. Perhaps we could use The Watering Hole as a meeting place but any other ideas, particularly in the city centre are more than welcome.

Now what can you do? I'm just an ordinary fan like the people reading this article. I have my own ideas, but need assistance to get the club going. Please get involved in one way or another, however small the commitment. All support and interest will be greatly appreciated, though the bigger the better. Watch out for more publicity soon - I'm currently contacting other independent supporters organisations for advice and support.

I look forward to hearing from everybody, please get in touch. Neil Millard, 5 Corncrake Drive, Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham B36 0QU or 'phone 021-788-3218.

In the light of Ken Wheldon's recent announcement about the future of the existing supporters club, which effectively amounts to a takeover by Blues, Tired and Weary fells that the formation of a club free from any interference from Blues is essential and we urge you to get in touch with Neil.

Meanwhile the London Blues Supporters Club, has, like the team, suffered from diminishing support this season. There are about 35 of us who have kept the faith, although some of these live out of reach (Isle of Wight and Cyprus). The club runs a darts team which often plays home games at the Spreadeagle in Pimlico, and interested people are welcome.

There's also a football team which needs new players to take part in regular friendly matches. And 5-a-side tournaments during the summer. Recently, the soccer team went some way towards paying back the Villa with a 3-0 victory over their London Supporters branch.

The club produces a newsletter and also organises travel to games home and away as well as socials - at one recent function Garry Pendrey and some of the team came along. Any Blues fans exiled in London and wanting to drown their sorrows in company should contact Chairman Dave Csondor on 01-922-2479, (Dave also runs the soccer team) or Tracey Mitchell 01-543-0603 who runs the darts team. Evening numbers only. **Adrian Brown.**

And if neither of these two organisation appeal to you, you can always join the Birmingham City Supporters Club of Norway (as far as we know, Ken isn't going to try and take them over). They publish a newsletter, Blues-Info, which is mainly, although not entirely, written in Norwegian. They number about 100 and a few of them come over two or three times a year - you may occasionally have seen their flag at games. If you want more information, copies of Blues-Info, or maybe you'd just like to get in touch with them to swop jokes about Eric Thorsvedt, then the chap to write to is the club secretary Bjorn Irgens, Abakken 2, 1300 Sandvika, Norway or phone him on Norway 02138285 and give him a surprise.

Mancunian Memories By Dave Wallace

Teams:
BIRMINGHAM
Merrick
Hall Green
Newman Smith Boyd
Kinsey Murphy
Astall Brown Govan
●
Clarke Revie Johnstone
Dyson Hayes
Paul Ewing Barnes
Little Leivers
Trautmann
MANCHESTER CITY
Referee: Mr. A. Bond (Fulham).

PATH TO THE FINAL

Birmingham
Torquay (A) 7—1, Murphy 2, Astall, Kinsey, Brown 3.
Leyton Orient (A) 4—0, Brown 2, Murphy, Finney.
West Bromwich (A) 1—0, Murphy.
Arsenal (A) 3—1, Astall, Murphy, Brown.
Sunderland (Hillsborough) 3—0, Kinsey, Astall, Brown.

Manchester City
Blackpool (H) 2—1, Johnstone, Dyson.
Southend (A) 1—0, Hayes.
Liverpool (H) 0—0, (A) 2—1, Dyson, Hayes.
Everton (H) 2—1, Hayes, Johnstone.
Tottenham Hotspur (Villa Park) 1—0, Johnstone.

MANCHESTER CITY (1) 3 (HAYES, DYSON, JOHNSTONE) **BIRMINGHAM (1) 1** (KINSEY)

Attendance : 100,000 Receipts : £49,856

Birmingham City will always feature prominently in the recollections of us older Manchester City supporters. For after we'd lost the cup to Newcastle in '55 (with a ten man team for the most part) we were presented with the opportunity or repeating our 1933/34 FA Cup Final performances (losing to Everton, winning against Portsmouth) but Birmingham, the Iron Men, provided formidable opposition.

They were naturally the team on every Mancunian schoolboys' lips - 'City will definitely win the cup' - it was said - but with the rider - Birmingham or Manchester?

Having lost the '55 final to a team whose captain had no hair (Jimmy Scoular) it was hardly likely that we'd do the same against a team whose captain didn't appear to have any teeth (Len Boyd).

WIN THE CUP

And win the cup we did, though with a patched up team, and only in that melancholy Brummie accent does the oft repeated lament sound authentic 'we couldn't even win the cup against a team whose goalie had a broken neck!'

The Iron Men were crushed, Peter Murphy said in Charlie Buchanan's Football Monthly, because they were too cocky. Such was the naivety and innocence of footballers in those pre Coleman, Davies and Motson days that they hadn't yet realised that only teams with their name on the cup actually win it. It doesn't matter whether you're cocky or not, doesn't even matter if you score more goals than the opposition, if your names not on that trophy you won't get presented.

ENSUING YEARS

The ensuing years have been kinder to our City than to Birmingham and when we hear Jasper Carrott saying '55 promotion, '56 the Cup Final, then nothing', we realise that we're not p'raps as badly done to as we think, although 13 seasons since our last pot is getting a bit much.

Over the years I've visited St Andrews a few times, the first being Christmas 1958 when we lost 6-1 on a foggy day, most of the goals being 'own' - then the day after we won 4-1 at Maine Road. This was followed by plenty more losses on grey Birmingham days and I missed our wins in '78 and '79, not coming again 'til New Years Day 1983 when my eldest daughter rekindled the away bug in me - it was a 2-2 draw and we went down that season but under one of our ex-managers, Ron Saunders, Birmingham obliged following term!

UPS AND DOWNS

Then of course we went up together in '85, Birmingham looking the stronger team, but strangely coming straight back down (and utilising a certain John Bond!) This time we obliged 12 months later.

So after our rare double last season and some rather unsporting behaviour towards our 16 year old debut boy Neil Lennon, a 0-0 draw at Maine Road was endured when the Brummie support this time touched the Maine Road faithful, and we find ourselves in 1989 with our teams, so often in tandem, now apparently heading in opposite directions.

And so to St Andrews for the return match.

My colleague and I followed our programme notes to find the ground but as usual got hopelessly lost. As the old adrenalin got going we aimed for the floodlights, parked up in faithful Gray Street and duly handed over our 40p protection money to the local lads - same everywhere, give 'em a membership card I say, that'd sort 'em out!

HI HO, HI HO, IT'S

Off to the ground with our scarves on as there's plenty of light blues (and bananas) around - al-

ways walk past the main stand, you never know who you might clock and there's a chance we'll be a man short and Mel will ask me to don a shirt... the horse shit is deftly dodged and we're inside the ground, sadly too old to be frisked. Pick up a couple of programmes and skip down to the bogs with a light heart - this is luxurious someone says; a nice big stainless steel trough which makes a sonorous ring when you pee against it. But it's a windy day (there's no roof) and the spray has a mind of its own.

The West Midlands police, sensibly, ignore us selling King of the Kippax, but I later learn they've frog marched well-known City fan/photographer Kevin Cummins away and he's now up in court. Didn't risk refreshments but plenty do and as they don't promptly throw up it must be OK, though I hear someone winge about running out of tomato ketchup!

On to the terraces, where the steepness and depth of step is awesome - City fans have half or more of the Tilton and like at Maine Road, Huddersfield, Burnley and Spurs as was, the 'Kop's' down the side. Now the daftest fans in the League used to be Wolves who chose to ignore their enoromous Kop leaving it to the away fans and preferring the North Stand (or cowshed) - but you Brummies sure slipped up when you didn't take the Tilton - and why the Railway End isn't given completely to the away fans and the seats taken our of the front bit a la` Leeds.... well!

Still I suppose you didn't want to be called Charleners or anythin!

THE GAME

As for the game, we didn't have to do a lot to win and at half-time a quick flick through the programme reveals it's a neat little production giving Alex Harley a mention like last season, which is quite touching in Man City's history books he hardly gets a passing paragraph. There's a piece on membership, Brummie goalies which as an ex-goalie, I liked, and an old cup game featured with one of the few City cup programmes not yet nestling in my collection. There's also a good article by Charlie Bamforth until he completely blows it by applauding Cloughie's actions and saying what's missing is schoolboys getting a clip round the ear hole stuff. Well Charlie, I can tell you that in '56 'Blackboard Jungle' came out and schools were never the same again, and more than one master got his cumuppance when lads reached the 4th and 5th years.

So to the second half with the points obviously not going to Brum: The 'sack the board' chant was aided and abetted by City fans (we thought we had the monopoly on this one!) While this was initially a mocking situation the letters I've had from our fans on the subject indicate that there was genuine feeling and appreciation in the 'loyal supporters' chant, cos we've bin there too... and how.

One things for sure, though, I still identify big clubs where they were when I started watching footy in the mid-fifties. Thus, whatever happens in the future, to me Birmingham City will always be the Iron Men of the '56 Cup Final that we somehow overcame.

Dave Wallace is Editor of King of the Kippax - Man City fanzine

Date: 5 May 1956
Place: Wembley
Score: Manchester City 3
Birmingham City 1
Team Colours:
Manchester City
Maroon and white stripes;
Birmingham City
White shirts, blue shorts
Official Referee: A Bond
(Middlesex)
Goal Scorers:
Manchester City
Hayes 3,
Dyson 65,
Johnstone 70
Birmingham City
Kinsey 15
Managers:
Manchester City
Les McDonald
Birmingham City
Arthur Turner
Attendance: 100,000
Gate Receipts: £49,856
Guest of Honour:
HM Queen Elizabeth II

We're *not* on target for a Million!

"We're doing our bit - why aren't you doing yours?" That was the comment recently to both Blues and the FA from the organisers of Tired and Weary's unprecedented fund raising venture, where we donate 10p for every booking and 50p for each sending-off Blues win this season. And astonishingly, there's still time to enter - you can even have your contribution back-dated to the start of the season. Just fill in your name and address on the form at the the bottom of this page, together with the sum you're sponsoring the lads for (you can go over the 10p and 50p amounts if you wish). We'll contact you at the end of the season to let you know the final total (and you can read the full breakdown in the first Tired and Weary of next season) and then you can rush us your money.

In the meantime, and ever mindful of the club's 'tricky' financial position, we've sent the following letter to Colin Downey, the FA's Referee's Secretary. No response yet, unfortunately, but we're still confident that our missive will get the right result.

Dear Mr Downey,

We are co-editors of 'Tired And Weary', an erstwhile organ charting the everyday story of Birmingham City Football Club folk. As we're sure you are all too aware, the club currently languishes in the lower reaches of Division Two, and, with money for team strengthening at a premium, there they look likely to remain.

And Colin, here's where you come in. Tired And Weary, in conjunction with its readers, is sponsoring the team for each booking and sending-off won this season. Problems with on-field discipline, it should be noted, have dogged the club for many years now and so as the curtain went up on the current season, we all looked forward to seeing red and yellow cards brandished liberally at the 'baddits in blue' as our players are affectionately known.

Alas, after a top-notch start, when cautions exceeded one per game, things have somewhat fallen away. Obviously, in light of our enterprising sponsorship, should this trend continue, it is likely to have a dramatic effect on the club's future financial viability and the manager's team building plans. Urgent action is required and it seems to us Colin that, via your exalted status as refereeing overlord, you are uniquely positioned to help. What we want you to do is 'have a word', so to speak, with those you appoint to officiate in Blues matches reminding them of the importance of clamping down on indiscipline.

We have enclosed a pound to help you enjoy life's pleasures. Should you feel we are people you can do business with, let us assure you that there is plenty more where that came from, if you know what we mean.

To assist in our venture, perhaps you might even persuade Clive 'The Book' Thomas himself to take up the cudgels and wet his whistle one last time.

We feel sure you will respond favourably to our offer and eagerly await the results.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Beauchampé Co-Editor

The story so far

(up to and including March 27 1989

BOOKINGS

ATKINS	8	BREMNER	1
WHITTON	5	CHILDS	1
OVERSON	4	FRAIN	1
ROBERTS	4	LANGLEY	1
WIGLEY	2	RANSON	1
HOPKINS	2	ROBINSON	1
ASHLEY	1	TREWICK	1
BIRD	1		

TOTAL 34

SENDINGS OFF - OVERSON 1

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to BOOK-OFF and sent to our usual address.

I agree to sponsor the Blues for..... per booking and ..... per sending off for the duration of the 1988/89 season. This to cover League, FA and Littlewoods Cup games only.

Signed _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Name _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Address _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

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